



TRAVEL  OREGON

RIVER RECREATION STUDIO | WILLAMETTE RIVER

Program Overview & Outcomes
Salem | February 22, 2023

STUDIO OUTCOMES

- Sustainable, improved use w/expanded river community that includes visitors & locals
- Streamlined experiences with connected transportation, river recreation and community connections
- Knowledge around promising practices + case studies of thriving and successful river recreation communities
- Cultivate connections between river access and surrounding communities
- Improved clarity around business development opportunities and gaps in infrastructure, amenities, and experiences with demand
- Enhanced Willamette River Water Trail recreation information and promotion



RIVER RECREATION DESTINATION QUALITIES

- Compelling, well-stewarded river environment
- Well-planned infrastructure
- Business services
- Communications / Information
- Recreationalists
- River Culture
- Asset Management
- Community Planning



STEERING COMMITTEE PARTICIPATION

- Willamette Valley Visitors Association
- C2 Recreation
- Oregon Marine Board
- Oregon Parks & Recreation Department
- A. Helfrich Outfitters
- Albany Visitors Association
- City of Oregon City
- City of Canby
- City of Wilsonville
- City of Albany
- City of Independence
- Corvallis Parks & Rec
- Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- Clackamas County Tourism
- ENRG Kayaking
- Friends of Butteville
- Travel Salem
- Travel Lane County
- Oregon River Safety Preservation Alliance
- Polk County Tourism Alliance
- Willamalane Park & Rec. District
- Willamette Riverkeeper
- Visit Corvallis

STUDIO LOGISTICS

SPRING 2020

Segment 1: April 14

Willamette Park – Milwaukie Bay Park

12 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. | Tumwater Ballroom, Oregon City

Segment 2: April 15

Spong's Landing Park – Willamette Park

12 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. | Antonia Ballroom, Canby

Segment 3: April 21

Buena Vista Park – Spong's Landing

12 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. | Independence City Hall, Independence

Segment 4: April 22

Peoria Park – Buena Vista Park

12 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. | 4 Spirits Distillery, Corvallis

Segment 5: April 23

Clearwater Park – Peoria Park

12 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. | Graduate Hotel, Eugene

Full Region: May 19

Clearwater Park – Milwaukie Bay Park

Summit: 12 p.m. – 5 p.m. | Keizer Civic Center

Networking: 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. | Keizer Civic Center



DESTINATION PRESSURES

- Unprecedented increase in river recreation
- New guides & outfitters
- Increased rentals
- Increase in new users
- Safety concerns & need for PFDs
- Need for river information & equipment
- User conflicts at put-ins & parking areas
- Congested recreational areas
- Road access challenges for first responders
- Decreased experience quality
- Need for collaborative partnerships



PROGRAM EVOLUTION TIMELINE

- 2019 Steering Committee Development
- ~~Studio Workshops~~
- Inclusive River Recreation Strategy utilizing engaged Steering Committee
- Development of Action Teams
- Capacity Commitments
- Catalytic Project Development
- Cross-jurisdictional Investment
- Multi-year Implementation & Adaptation



A wide-angle photograph of a river flowing through a lush, green forest. The water is a deep blue, reflecting the sky and the surrounding trees. In the lower center of the frame, a person is seen from behind, paddling a yellow kayak. The person is wearing a yellow life vest and holding a red and white paddle. The river is flanked by dense, tall trees, and the sky is a clear, bright blue. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic, suggesting a recreational activity in a natural setting.

RIVER RECREATION PROJECTS

Willamette River Recreation Outcomes Management & Stewardship Initiatives



Willamette
Valley

Katie McFall
Communications & Program Manager

One River

- Connectivity across partners from Eugene to Portland
- Collaborative focus on enhancements to the visitor river experience
- Cross-agency support partnership and engagement



Covid Response Summer 2020

- Immediate response through cross-agency support
 - Restrooms
 - Trash Receptacles
 - River clean-ups



Covid Response

Fall 2020

- Identified next 3-9 months of Steering Committee priorities prepping for Summer 2021
- Key Priorities included:
 - River Safety Messaging
 - PR and Marketing initiatives
 - Willamette Water Trail Toolkit
 - DMO landing pages



Safety Messaging

- River recreation toolkit created
 - Toolkit was shared with local and statewide partners throughout the state, to use at their own discretion
- The toolkit was also integrated with the Travel Oregon 'Take Care Out There' messaging



PR & Marketing

Pre-summer boating
messaging and education

- Development of DMO river-focused landing pages
- 76 placements totaling more than 14,279,514 impressions
- CPM (cost per thousand impressions) of \$0.77 (industry standard benchmark is \$5.00)





Travel Oregon Destination Ready Grant Award

WVVA on behalf of the steering committee was awarded a \$50,000 grant

Implemented Projects:

- 800+ lifejackets ordered and distributed to ten land managers and cities along the river
- Five life jacket kiosks built and installed in the summer 2021
- Spanish language additions to OSMB signage
- Thirty clean-ups over a six week period through Willamette Riverkeeper which removed 1000's of pounds of trash from the river.
- Creation of a marginalized/BIPOC paddle program delivered by Willamette Riverkeeper

Project Outcomes:

- So far, fatalities on the Willamette River have been less than last year
- The BIPOC paddles have been extremely successful
- Other cities and communities along the river have reached out regarding the new infrastructure they're seeing along the river
- Continue to leverage partnerships with our local communities



OSU Locker System



Oregon State
University

Prototype Development Lab

Engineer | Design | Build

- Purpose
- Requirements:
 - Easy to maintain and use
 - Durable
 - Secure
- Current Status



Water Trail Signage

- Purpose: Expand river mile signage at set intervals for way finding and safety.
- Outcomes:
 - We went with a 10 mile distance between signs.
 - Nearly all the sites are on public land.
 - Currently have signs in production for the cities of Eugene, Corvallis, Keizer, Lake Oswego, and Yamhill



Regenerative Itineraries

- Connect visitors and travelers to the destination, people give back and gain local knowledge
- Led by professional guides, feature recreation, dinner, overnight and outreach to community
- McKenzie River Trips in summer 2021 was a teaser program



Willamette River

Regenerative tourism is the new frontier



Submitted photo

Shaded banks buffer the north-flowing Willamette River on its run through Albany, a city of 53,000. Founded in 1847 at the confluence of the Willamette and Calapooya rivers, Albany quickly became a transportation hub served by regular steamboat routes.

BY JOANNA MANN

Albany Democrat-Herald

The Willamette River symbolizes many things for Oregonians who grew up on its banks — carefree childhood summers, lazy float trips and, for some, a lifelong career in environmentalism.

River tourism is often ex-

or help with river cleanup, and spend the next day paddling on the water.


“Regenerative trips are a key priority moving forward,” said Katie McFall, who works for the Willamette Valley Visitors Association. “It’s about giving back to the area you’re visiting and enjoying it simultane-



mittee applied for grant funding to build five new lifejacket kiosks along the river, two of which are in Corvallis. The group got additional funding for river cleanups and helped pilot a river safety program for BIPOC and LGBTQ groups, as well as veterans, formerly houseless individu-

“People can paddle all the way from Eugene to Portland,” McFall said.

Many people are interested in spending time on the river but may not have the needed equipment or knowledge of where to start and end. Willamette Tides is a new adventure company in Corvallis that



“Whether through communications, marketing, other digital assets, signage, or improving access infrastructure or safety to improve visitor water recreation experiences, the Willamette Water Trail steering committee has proven to be a valuable mechanism for bringing diverse stakeholders together.

Through common goals and missions, the steering committee has evolved into a high-functioning, goal and task-oriented team, rowing in the same direction.

We’re able to work together collaboratively, ultimately benefit Oregonians and visitors alike - who want to explore and care for, the Willamette River. I’m extremely grateful to WVVA for their leadership and facilitation of this important group.”

**- Ashley Massey, Public Information Officer
Oregon State Marine Board**



A close-up photograph of a pair of hands holding a large bunch of dark purple grapes. The hands are weathered and have some dirt on them, suggesting they are from a farmer or worker in a vineyard. The grapes are fresh and glistening. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, likely representing a vineyard. The text "Thank You" is overlaid in the center in a white, serif font. In the bottom right corner, the "Willamette Valley" logo is visible, featuring a green leaf icon above the text "Willamette Valley" in a green, serif font, with a white underline beneath "Valley".

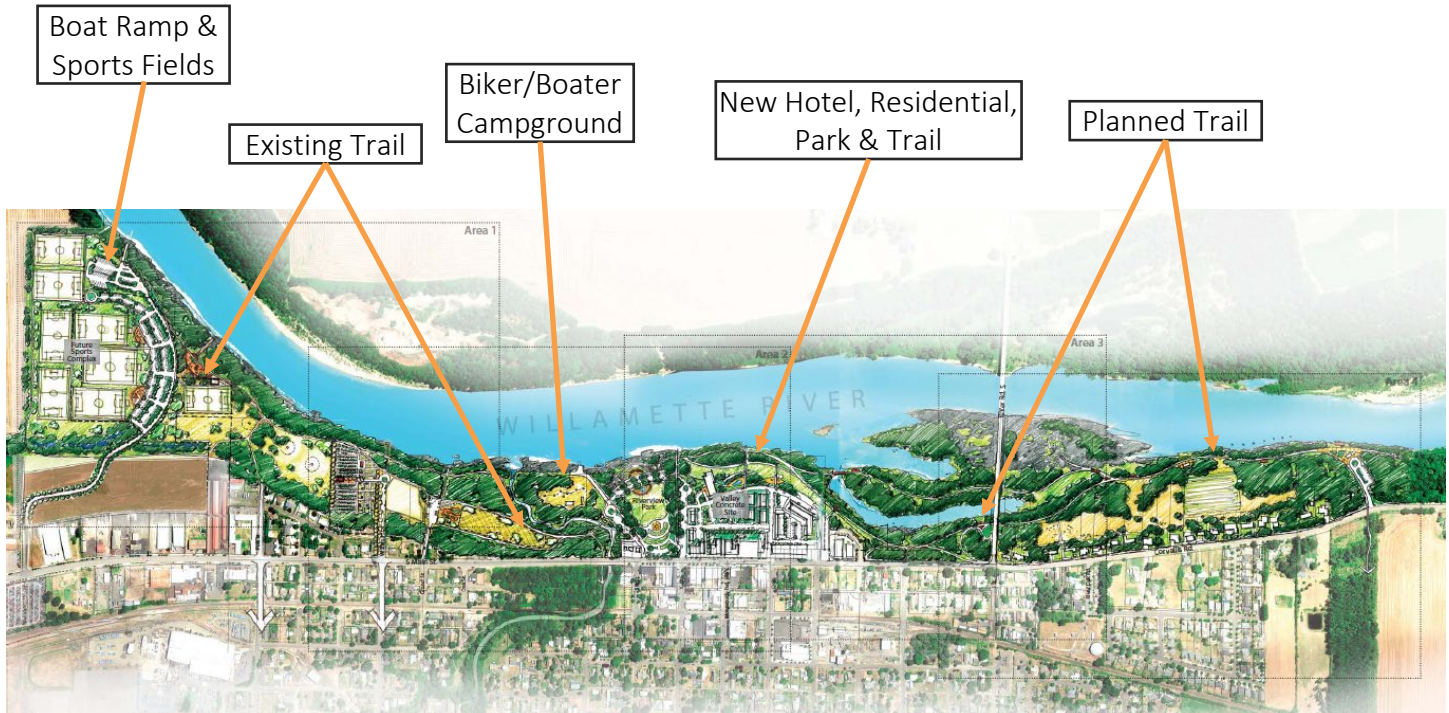
Thank You

Willamette
Valley

A LONG-TERM PLAN FOR RIVERFRONT RECREATION



Amenities serve locals and visitors, who support local businesses.



BIKER/BOATER CAMPGROUND

A way to pull people off the river and road, and create lodging affordably.



An aerial night photograph of a riverfront development. The scene is illuminated by streetlights and building lights, creating a warm glow against the dark twilight sky. In the foreground, a large, curved green lawn area is visible, featuring a circular paved plaza and a curved walkway. To the left, a wide river flows, with a bridge crossing it in the distance. The background shows a dense residential area with numerous houses and buildings, extending towards rolling hills under a deep blue sky. The overall atmosphere is one of a vibrant, modern urban waterfront.

INDEPENDENCE LANDING

Riverfront lodging, residential and park development create benefits for downtown.

KAYAK LOCKER

Additional amenities are needed to make it easier for river users to stop and experience places like Independence

